



3.1. INVENTORY OF RELEVANT PLANS AND CURRENT PROJECTS

Some relevant plans have been prepared that include findings that can be incorporated into this pedestrian plan. Limited concepts recommended in these other efforts have been integrated as recommendations and considered in the prioritization of projects in this pedestrian plan. Highlights of these relevant planning projects are presented below.

Comprehensive Plans

At the time of this plan, Albemarle is considering undertaking the development of a comprehensive land-use plan. The land use strategies addressed in such a plan will likely include discussions of pedestrian-friendly land development patterns and action items to encourage new land-use decisions to consider pedestrian mobility. Any future comprehensive transportation plan will use this plan as its pedestrian component.

Rail-Trail Plans

The City has received grants from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to construct the first two segments of the Roger F. Snyder Greenway System, which will connect to the City's existing bike path at Montgomery Park and will follow Little Long Creek to N.C. 24-27. The City has plans to extend this system in the future with a goal of eventually connecting the downtown, neighborhoods, schools, and parks via a network of greenways, bike paths, and sidewalks. Several opportunities for potential greenways are identified as part of this pedestrian plan.

Roadway Project Plans

Some roadway projects in the Albemarle area are currently being designed. As these plans are advanced, appropriate pedestrian accommodations should be incorporated into the plans to enhance walking opportunities in these developing areas. On-going roadway design projects that should account for pedestrian travel include the following:

- TIP projects: The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will construct sidewalks included in TIP projects if local entities will participate in the cost and will agree to maintain them.
 - The bridge (Bridge # 33) over Long Creek on NC 73 near City Lake Park is scheduled to be replaced as a TIP project (B-4276).
 - US 52 from 24/27 south is scheduled to be a four laned-divided highway (R-2320).
 - Ridge from Northeast Connector to NC 740 (U-3300).
 - NC 24/27 road widening(R-2530 & R-967).
 - B-3700: SR1214 over Long Creek, Replace bridge #187
 - B-3908: SR1225 over Big Beak Creek, Replace bridge #246
 - B-4279: SR 1963 over Scaly Bark Creek, Replace bridge #120
- Another project of note, the YMCA is planning the construction of a new sidewalk around their facility that improves an already popular walking route.



Small-Area Plans

No small area plans have been completed in Albemarle.

Capital Improvement Plans

The City of Albemarle maintains a Capital Improvement Plan and routinely evaluates transportation improvements as part of the City's long-range plan.

Bicycle Plans

Albemarle has not developed a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, but North Carolina State Bicycle Route 6 (The Piedmont Spur) travels through Albemarle. Signs directing bicyclists to Routes 1 and 3 are also posted in Albemarle. Although this pedestrian plan will not address bicycle facilities and programs in detail, its recommendations will be designed in a way not to preclude bicycle improvements.



Pedestrian Plans

No other pedestrian plans have been developed in recent years in the Albemarle area.



3.2. EXISTING POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Existing Funding Sources

There is currently no dedicated funding source for pedestrian projects in Albemarle.

Existing Local Ordinances

Subdivision Ordinance

The primary local ordinance guiding sidewalk additions is the City's subdivision ordinance. This ordinance applies to all new subdivisions within Albemarle's planning jurisdiction. The subdivision ordinance includes the following provision for sidewalks in all new subdivisions:

"A five-foot wide sidewalk will be required on one side of the street" (City of Albemarle Subdivision Ordinance, Sections 91.09 and 91.11)

Furthermore the subdivision ordinance states that where new sidewalks are constructed, a planting strip with a minimum width of seven feet must be provided between the curb and the sidewalk. The sidewalk itself must be a minimum of five feet in width.



Sidewalk development should be required by policy for all new developments

Although the City's Subdivision Ordinance mandates the provision of sidewalks in new subdivisions, there are **few requirements for sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities along with new construction or reconstruction that is not associated with the subdivision of existing parcels**. However, the Ordinance does require all non-residential developments on existing streets to install a five-foot sidewalk. A more detailed description of Albemarle's policies and ordinances are discussed and critiqued in Section 8, *Recommended Policies and Ordinances*.

Zoning Ordinance

The City's Zoning Ordinance (which does cover single-parcel projects) contains no specific references to the provision of pedestrian facilities.

Comparison to Other Ordinances in the Region

The sidewalk dimension requirements specified in Albemarle's subdivision ordinance (sidewalk width, location, and planting strip width) compare favorably to that of other municipalities and counties in the region. Table 1 provides a comparison of the sidewalk policies in Albemarle to that of other North Carolina localities.



Table 1: Regional Sidewalk Policies (For New Subdivisions)

LOCALITY	MINIMUM SIDEWALK WIDTH	MINIMUM PLANTING STRIP WIDTH	BOTH SIDES OF STREET?
Albemarle	5 feet	7 feet	No
Charlotte (<i>current</i>)	4 feet	4 feet	Yes
Charlotte (<i>proposed</i>)	5 feet	8 feet	Yes
Davidson	5 feet	6 feet	Yes
Mint Hill	5 feet	3 feet	No
Huntersville	5 feet	7 feet	Yes
Matthews	5 feet	8 feet	Yes
Pineville	5 feet	4 feet	Yes
Concord	5 feet	6 feet	Yes
Cabarrus County	5 feet	6 feet	Yes
Monroe	5 feet	10 feet	Yes
Union County	None	None	No
Belmont	4 feet	6 feet	Yes
Gastonia	4 feet **	2.5 feet ***	No
Gaston County	None	None	No
Rock Hill	4.5 feet	3 feet	Yes on most streets (unless waived)
Hickory	5 feet	4 feet	Yes, on streets with an average of more than 200 cars per day
Catawba County	None	None	No
Lincoln County *	None	4 feet	Yes
Lincolnton	4 feet	6 feet	Yes

* Sidewalk requirements in Lincoln County apply only to new subdivisions in "areas likely to be subject to heavy pedestrian traffic such as near schools and shopping areas."

** The requirement is 5 feet if the subdivision is built along a major thoroughfare or state road.

*** The planting strip is 6 feet and includes trees if the project is a planned residential development.

SOURCE: The Charlotte Observer, June 23, 2005, page 10A

Staffing and Committees

The City of Albemarle's Public Works Director is responsible for the development of this pedestrian plan, but other City staff is expected to play a role in its implementation as well. As described in Section 1, a steering committee comprised of agency representatives, local citizens, and other stakeholders was established to provide input to this planning process.

After completion of the pedestrian plan, the existing Steering Committee should be maintained as a bicycle / pedestrian advisory committee or a new committee should be formed to perform this role. This group will work toward implementation of the plan and help continue to build momentum for pedestrian projects.

The City of Albemarle works closely with other local, regional, and statewide agencies as needed for all transportation projects, including pedestrian improvements. Partnerships with Centralina Council of Governments and NCDOT will be particularly important as the City implements additional projects.